



Drew's Family Story of Inclusion

Background Information, as told by Helen Burch, Head Start/Early Head Start Health and Disabilities Services Coordinator (August 2009)

Drew came to the Early Head Start program when he was 15 months old. He was not crawling or walking. He had been in a home childcare setting, where he was kept in a crib most of the day. He was receiving special education services for developmental delay. He is legally blind, as is his father. His parents were very concerned when we encouraged them to allow us to enroll Drew with his same-age peers. They were very protective and were worried that the children would walk on or fall on their son. When Terri, his home-based special education teacher, and I talked with them about the benefits he could gain, they reluctantly agreed to give it a try. Within the first two months that Drew was in the toddler class, he began to crawl, pull himself up, and finally to walk. By 18 months of age, he was going down the toddler slide with the rest of his classmates. Mom and Dad were amazed at his progress. Their biggest problem became how to child-proof their home for a new, highly mobile Drew. He walked, he ran, he climbed!! He continued in Early Head Start to age three and transitioned to the Head Start Program at the same child development center. His Head Start teacher, Jody, worked very well with Drew and his parents. His special education teacher, Terri, continued to serve him at the center and in the home until he was ready to transition to kindergarten. By the time he left the program, his gross- and fine-motor skills were on target developmentally, he was talking up a storm, and he participated in all aspects of his preschool experience.

Handout #4

Drew's Family Story of Inclusion



When I look back on our experience serving Drew and his family, I realize that he was the one that made me a true believer that when we serve children in natural environments, they blossom into so much more than we could ever imagine for them. When I visit with parents now about putting their child in a classroom with same-age peers, I do it with so much more conviction because I have seen the miracle that is Drew.

My most recent contact with Drew was a couple of years ago. We had his little brother enrolled in Early Head Start until age three. He then moved to our agencies' part-day Head Start program. I saw them at a joint multicultural fair. Drew was in second or third grade. He was still getting special education support but was in an inclusive classroom. His parents said he was doing well in school. His parents had continued to be active in their parent-teacher organization and were very vocal in their support of inclusive services.

Handout #4

Drew's Family Story of Inclusion